



## **2017 TANF SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

***Erie County Department of Social Services***

***Comprehensive Employment Division***

Mark Poloncarz

Erie County Executive

---

Marie Cannon

Social Services Acting Commissioner



# Buffalo Urban League

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES. CHANGING LIVES

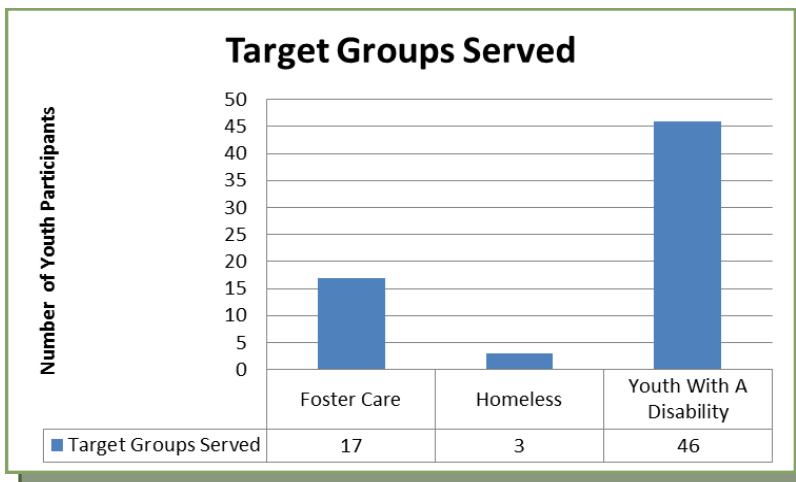
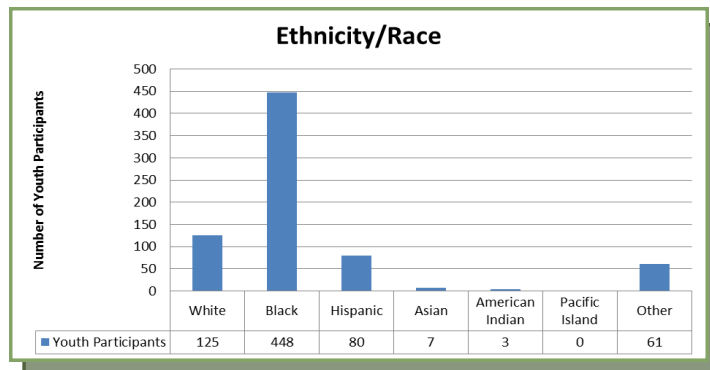
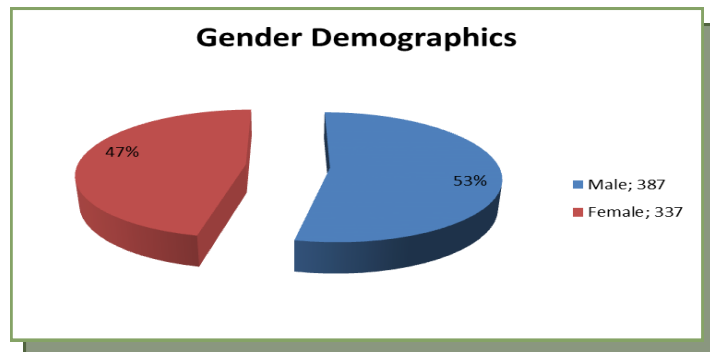
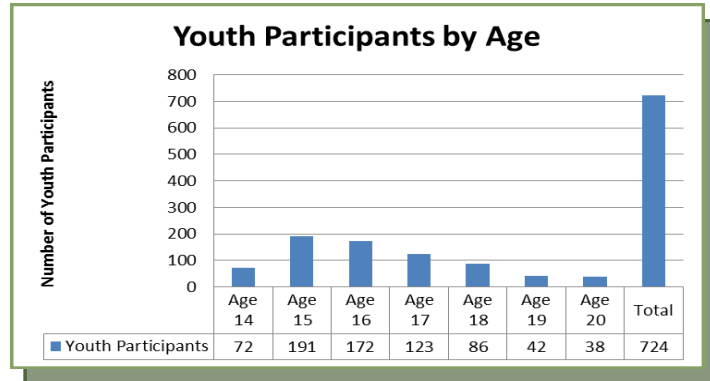


## **Community Partners**

Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS) offered the 2017 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in collaboration with community partners to provide youth with a meaningful work experience this summer. The Buffalo Urban League in partnership with Catholic Charities was awarded a contract by ECDSS to administer the eight-week SYEP from July 10<sup>th</sup> through September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **SYEP Enrollment**

This year's summer program funding supported 724 youth participants between 14 and 20 years of age working at a total of 106 worksites throughout Erie County. Eligible youth worked at least 20 hours per week in various entry level positions, earning the state minimum wage of \$9.70 per hour.



## **Target Groups**

The SYEP concentrated to help high need youth such as foster care youth, homeless/runaway youth, and youth with disabilities.



## **SYEP Employment Fair**

A SYEP Employment Fair was held on June 24<sup>th</sup> at Erie Community College –City Campus, hosted by ECDSS in collaboration with Buffalo Urban League and Catholic Charities. The employment fair served as an opportunity for youth to meet with potential worksites from a variety of local industries while learning about different career paths.

## **Employment Fair Activities**

Over 200 youth participants and more than 60 parents along with 24 worksite providers attended the employment fair and were exposed to a number of workforce development resources, ECDSS Employment Counselors were on site to conduct “mock interviews” and to provide tips on job-seeking skills. Buffalo Urban League performed four entertaining skits on interviewing, job preparation and workplace attire. Also, a presentation by Dress for Success took place. Informational flyers were distributed to the youth on the following topics: networking, soft skills, employer expectations, and tips on job searching and successfully working an employment fair.



### **Youth Orientation**

A pre-employment orientation was required for all youth participants prior to worksite placement. The rules and regulations of the program were discussed with youth.

Additionally, the orientation provided clear expectations and key information to the youth regarding participation in the program.



### **SYEP Workshops**

SYEP provided workshops on job readiness, career exploration, financial literacy, and opportunities to continue education and social growth. Many of the youth participants voiced their appreciation to learn about money management skills in SYEP's financial literacy component. A youth participant stated, **"The program helped me learn how to manage and save money, which I didn't know how to do before."**



### **Educational Component**

Educational activities were offered to youth participants throughout the SYEP. 476 youth participated in various educational components such as: The Fatherhood Connection (Boys to Men), Junior Achievement (Be Entrepreneurial and Career Success Programs), Kaleidoscope (STEM), Helping Mentoring & Uniting (HMU), and Young Entrepreneurship Preparation (YEP)



### **SYEP Worksites**

Youth worked in the community at worksites in a variety of industries, including:

- Arts and Recreation
- Community Service
- Educational Services
- Financial Services
- Health Care/Medical
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Media/Entertainment
- Real Estate/Property
- Retail



### **Worksite Orientation**

Worksite personnel attended an orientation before the youth participants were placed at the worksites. During the orientation, worksite representatives received contact information for the program operators, a worksite handbook, program forms, and an opportunity to ask programmatic questions. The program operators reiterated the requirement that worksites maintain a minimum ratio of 1 supervisor to 10 youth participants. ECDSS and program operators strived to ensure that the lines of communication were open to assist worksite representatives throughout the program.

## Worksite Visits

Worksite visits were conducted by ECDSS staff. Informal interviews were conducted with worksite supervisors as well as youth participants to obtain feedback directly from the participants, answer questions, and monitor compliance with program requirements.

*Learning New Skills*



*Earning Money*

*Butterfly Kisses Childcare*  
*Spread your wings and grow*



*Hands on Experience*

*Helping in the Community*



## **SYEP Networking & Outreach Event**

The eight-week SYEP concluded on Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. ECDSS along with community program partners Buffalo Urban League and Catholic Charities hosted the SYEP Networking & Outreach event at Erie County Community College-City Campus.

### **Networking Opportunities**

This event served as an opportunity to recognize the 724 youth participants that had been stationed at 106 worksites throughout Erie County. The youth were encouraged to share their summer work experience and provided an opportunity for worksite providers to continue building bonds with the community's youth workforce. Youth who attended received backpacks, t-shirts and school supplies for the upcoming year.



### **Outreach Representatives**

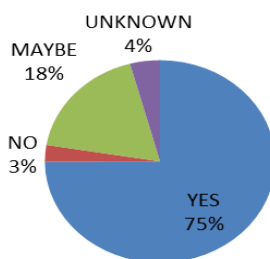
Representatives from Erie County Department of Health, Planned Parenthood, SNAP, Eat Smart NY, Western New York Independent Living, Inc., Catholic Charities Workforce and Education Services, Erie Community College, Buffalo Public School Adult Education, Erie BOCES, Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center, Buffalo and Erie County Library, New York State Department of Labor were on hand to answer questions and provide information regarding the services and resources that they offer.



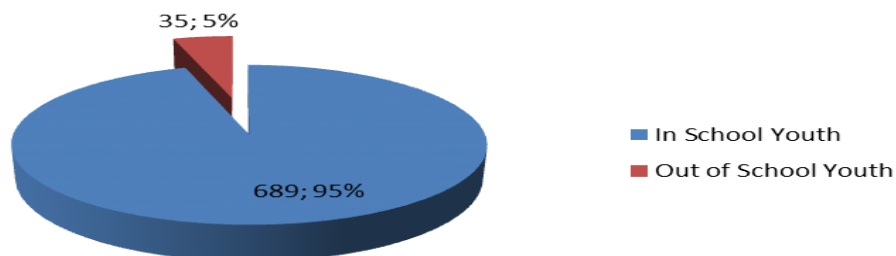
## Youth Survey

A youth participant survey was distributed at the completion of the SYEP Networking and Outreach event to gain future insight from the youth. One youth stated, **“I like learning how to work together as a team to complete a job.”** Another stated, **“This job helped me prepare for what I need to learn in the future.”** Many of the youth stated they enjoyed the opportunity to earn a wage over the summer and expressed interest in participating in the

**% OF YOUTH WHO DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN 2018 SYEP**



**Youth School Status**



## Identifying Idle Youth

Several youth indicated they were unsure of their future plans; but would like to continue working beyond the summer. To keep these youth engaged in career building activities and acquire the skills needed to transition to work, ECDSS partnered with Buffalo Urban League to administer a Youth Enhancement Employment Program. This program will work with youth ages 18-20 and provide job placement, case management, work readiness, career development supports, vocational exploration and educational achievement opportunities.

### **Worksite Feedback**

A representative from Tri –Main Development stated, **“We enjoy helping the youth learn new skills and are happy to be apart of their career development journey.”** A number of worksites have stated their desire to continue working with the youth beyond the completion of the SYEP. Dash’s Markets hired youth participants following the completion of the SYEP as cashiers and stock personnel. **Dash’s Markets stated their willingness to work with the youths’ school schedules and needs as well as their commitment to youth job development in the community.**



### **Worksite Surveys**

Surveys were sent to the worksite providers at the completion of the program. Worksites responses indicated that they would be interested in participating next year. A majority of the worksites felt assigned youth were a good match and that their programmatic needs were met effectively and with regular communication with the program operators. Many of the worksites found the extra help beneficial along with having the opportunity to introduce youth to their organization/business as valuable. Overall their responses were positive and a successful



## **Looking Forward**

The 2017 SYEP was a great success and demonstrated the program was a valuable tool for local youth moving forward in future careers. Many of the youth participants will continue to remain engaged in local neighborhood and community organizations as well as local businesses. A representative from Massachusetts Ave Project stated, **“Many of the neighborhood youth will be participating in our fall programming”** and **“The youth will be exposed to brand ideas and concepts outside the confines of traditional school teachings.”**



**Brenda McDuffie, Buffalo Urban League CEO**, thanked ECDSS for providing the opportunity for youth in Erie County to learn job skills, while also explaining the importance of earning a paycheck. **“Take this opportunity to grow in your life and in your career. We’re expecting great things from you”** said McDuffie.



**Ken Jarosz, program supervisor in the workforce development division of Catholic Charities**, praised SYEP youth for their commitment, reminding them to use their experiences, including learning values in their life long planning.

**Marie Cannon, Social Services Acting Commissioner**, stated, **“That we were excited about offering such a dynamic program that included employment and educational opportunities. It was a pleasure to work with Buffalo Urban League as the lead agency. The program was such a success that the state auditor is recommending it as a model program and plans to invite the Governor and OTDA Commissioner to visit next year.”**